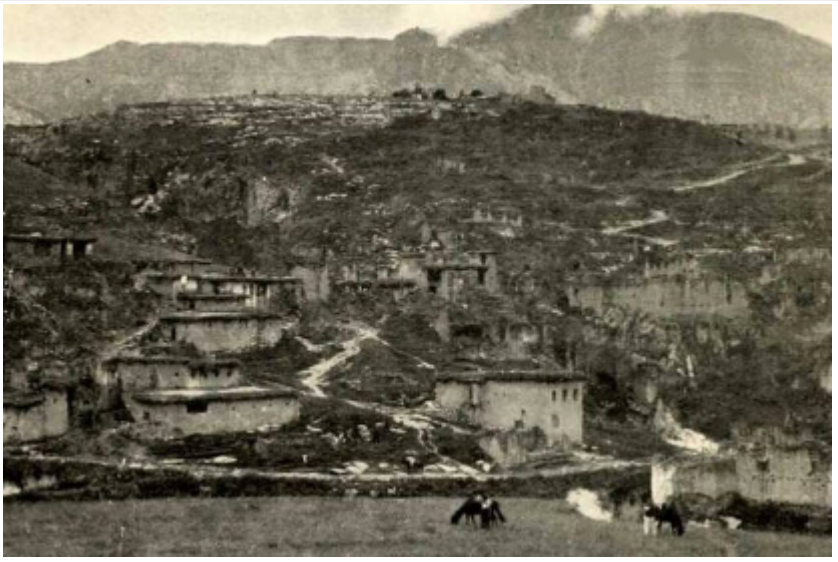
Rawandiz massacre

The **Rawandiz massacre** (Kurdish: کۆمەڵکوژی ڕەوەندیز) was a massacre that took place in May 1916, targeting the Muslim Kurdish population of the town of Rawandiz during World War I. The massacre was carried out by the Russian Empire and their Assyrian allies under Agha Petros, who had captured the town from the Ottoman Empire on 13 May 1916.

Rawandiz massacre

Part of Persecution of Kurds



The town of Rawandiz in ruins, aftermath of the massacre.

Location	Rawandiz, Iraq
Date	May, 1916
Target	Kurds
Attack type	Massacre, Rape, Looting
Deaths	8,000
Perpetrator	Russian Empire Assyrian volunteers
Motive	Anti-Kurdish sentiment, Islamophobia

Background

When the Ottoman Empire entered World War I, the Assyrians on behalf of their patriarch Shimun XIX Benyamin decided to side with the Russian Empire who would arm them during the struggle, the Ottomans had demanded the Assyrians neutrality with false promises in exchange.[1][2]

The population of Rawandiz before the war was estimated to be more than 10,000, with mosques, baths and extensive bazaars,[3] along with 2,000 houses.[4]

Massacre

The Russians carried out many operations in the regions of Kurdistan, which caused much suffering among the Muslim population.[5] The Russians together with their Assyrian and Armenian allies marched on Rawandiz in early May, and eventually occupied the town together on the 13th that same month,[6] holding it from May to July 1916.[7] The Assyrian and Armenian forces under the command of Agha Petros, together with the Russian army following their advice, began a massacre in Rawandiz out of anger and the desire for revenge.[6][8][9][10] The British officer and spy Edward William Charles Noel later blamed this massacre on what he called "*the Christian army of revenge of Agha Petros*."[11] The Russians had a rule not to harm the Muslim civilians or start a full war against them, but this rule was broken by one of the Assyrian officers.[11] After the massacre, only 20 percent of the town's original population is

said to have survived,[5][9] and out of the 2,000 houses in Rawandiz, only 60 were left.[12] According to Kurdish tradition, many women, fearing for their honor, jumped to their death from high places into the depths of the valley just to avoid getting raped by the soldiers.[13]

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